

Thespian Hall,
Boonville,
Missouri.

Cooper Co

HABS No. MO-233

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Kansas City

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
CENTRAL UNIT—ST. LOUIS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Thomas Wight, District Officer
400 First National Bank Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

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THESPIAN HALL
Fifth and Vine Streets, Boonville
Cooper County, Missouri

Owner: Fox Midwest Theatres of Kansas City, Missouri

Date of erection: Cornerstone laid July 25, 1855. Completed in the summer of 1857.

Builder-owner: "Boonville Library, Reading Room and Thespian Association"

Architect: The Society

Contractors: Homan and McDearmon, Boonville

Present condition: Altered

Description:

Built in the form of a classic temple, approximately 50 by 105 feet, including additions. Two stories above deep basement. Orange-red brick laid in common bond; entire front wall painted in recent years. Portico supported by four brick columns. Twelve-over-twelve-light sash; cast-iron lintels. Some doors original; pilaster caps of sheet metal. Cornice wood; tin roofing; two brick chimneys.

Interior: Floors wood; originally level but in recent years dropped several feet to improve view of stage; supported by cast-iron columns in basement and first floor. Some original trim remains; cast-iron panels of delicate design between window jambs. Stairways modern. Plasterwork modern; seems to date from 1901.

Alterations: Two doors cut in front and large stagehouse and brick lean-to added. Interior considerably altered.

Additional data:

The Missouri State Historical Society in a recent survey was not able to locate any other building still in existence west of the Alleghenies that was built to serve as a theater before Thespian Hall, or that has been used continuously for theatrical purposes since before that date. The Thespian Society was originally organized before 1838 and built this hall to serve for theater and clubrooms.

During the Civil War the theater served many purposes: Federal troops were quartered there; it was used as a hospital for wounded soldiers; the Home Guard fired upon advancing troops behind a breastworks which were erected in front of the theater, and many entertainments for the soldiers were held in its auditorium. During the years

following the War, an endless procession of road companies presented plays there, and it also served as a social center for the community. It is now called "The Lyric" and used for showing motion pictures.

Reference: "A Brief History of Thespian Hall, Boonville, Missouri" (Thespian Hall Preservation Committee, 1937)

--From data prepared by A. P. Harrison and Charles E. Peterson, 1937 and 1941.

An addendum to:
Thespian Hall
Northeast corner Fifth and Vine Streets
Boonville
Cooper County
Missouri

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

Addendum to THESPIAN HALL (p 3)

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Location: Northeast Corner of Fifth and Vine Streets, Boonville,
Cooper County, Missouri

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The following information was recorded by Alexander Piaget and Charles van Ravenswaay at the time the photograph was taken:

Dedicated July 4, 1857, as a community center building containing club rooms, a library, museum, theatre and public hall. The balcony was added when the building was remodeled.

PROJECT INFORMATION

The Piaget-van Ravenswaay Survey consists of a number of photographs, primarily of sites and structures in Missouri, which were taken before 1938 by Alexander Piaget and after that by Paul Piaget, both in conjunction with Charles van Ravenswaay. Photographs of buildings were incorporated into the HABS collection in 1985 by Laura Rupp, HABS historian. A master list is available in the ~~MO-1800~~ records for MO-1800.

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